

# Feminist Thought and Curating: On Method

## by Elke Krasny

What if there is a feminist turn in curating?<sup>1</sup> And if so, what is it and what does it do? Does it turn practices of curating and scholarship on the histories of curating into a feminist enterprise? Or, does it turn feminism into the subject of curatorial knowledge production? Or, does it turn to feminism in order to understand from a feminist standpoint what curating is and what it is that curating does? These questions raised here are central to my study of *The International Dinner Party in Feminist Curatorial Thought*.

### On Feminist Thought

My thesis examines *The International Dinner Party* within feminist curatorial thought. I turn to feminist thought in order to analyse, historicise, theorise, and practise curating. The conceptual framework, which I will lay out in this chapter, draws on feminist thought as a form of practice. Thought as practice is always situated in the concrete conditions specific to particular times and geographies. What is of interest to me throughout this thesis are the politics of feminist thought with regard to historiography, epistemology, and chronopolitics, and how the lessons gained from a critical understanding of these politics can be used to situate curating historically and theoretically.

What follows is first a conceptual framework of feminist thought. I will raise some key points here: feminist thought makes a claim to the non-monolithic; feminist thought is marked by paradox and contradiction to which it responds on a number of different theoretical, methodological, and practical levels; feminist thought expresses a pronounced resistance to be tied down by definition; feminist thought is in need of definition; feminist thought is in need of ongoing re/definition with regard to definition; feminist thought actively expresses resistance to categorization; feminist thought is characterised by the quest for transformation and the ongoing process of further differentiation from within; feminist thought engages in a historiographical project of writing, re-writing, reflecting, and questioning the processes of knowledge-making and the resulting knowledge production.

Secondly, I will proceed with mapping of some of feminist thought's paradigmatic historiographies. I seek to draw out how the key points raised above—ranging from the non-monolithic to ongoing processes of differentiation—are 'at work' in the already canonical or in the still emerging, yet already established histories and chronological narratives of feminist thought. What interests me are ways of relating critical insights gained from an understanding of feminist thought's historiographies to the writing of curatorial historiography. What is at stake here are the politics and power relations governing historiographic operations, and by extension the epistemological implications. I refer to Susan Archer Mann to stress the importance of such a historiographic approach. "The advantages of an historical approach are that readers can see how theories are constructed over time and how they often develop in response to concrete historical conditions as well as to

other perspectives and debates they engender."<sup>2</sup> With reference to the work of Marsha Meskimmon, such an historical approach needs to be troubled with regard to any underlying assumptions of a "progressive chronology."<sup>3</sup> In order to specifically locate feminist thought as responses to concrete historical conditions, it is necessary to continue working "against the grain of linear narratives of progress."<sup>4</sup> Meskimmon uses the work of Marxist feminist geographer Doreen Massey to reveal how "spatial differences are reconvened as temporal sequence."<sup>5</sup> In order to avoid the pitfalls of 'uncritical chronology,' one has to turn to "critical cartography."<sup>6</sup> My mapping of feminist thought's historiographies uses such a critical cartography as its method. There are important lessons to be gained from this with respect to curatorial historiography. In doing so, special attention will be paid to the chronopolitics at work within the concepts and operations used to construct such historiographies.

### The Opening Question/Opening the Question (Again)

I have opened this chapter with a question. The question was: What if there is a feminist turn in curating? By starting this chapter with a question, I am actually already deeply indebted to feminist thought's methods. I make myself part of feminist thought's legacy by activating the question as method. What is feminism? This question or questions similar to this have been raised and are still being raised over and over again. I would even go so far as to say that feminism is the question.<sup>7</sup> Posing the question of what feminism is, as I seek to demonstrate, leads to a strategic resistance to any merely descriptive or simply reductive definition. A feminist method, as one might argue, is the resistance to definition, the refusal to be tied down by any one monolithic and definitive definition. On the other hand, the question of what feminism is also pushes the need for ongoing processes of negotiating re-definitions and the quest for changing definitions. The question of what feminism is leads to establishing contours in order to avoid that feminism is too easily understood as some kind of indiscriminate form of attack, as a 'pick-as-you go' theory or a "particularly empty terminology, a critical stance without critique."<sup>8</sup> This is one of the constitutive paradoxes, or contradictions, actively challenging feminist thought. This also offered in the past, and continues to do so, a fertile ground for a large number of different strands of feminist thought, such as liberal, Marxist, socialist, or anarchist feminism,<sup>9</sup> or Christian, Islamic, Judaic, Hindu, or Buddhist feminism. Other strands of feminist thought include "psychoanalytic, care-focused, existentialist, postmodern, women of color, global, ecofeminist,"<sup>10</sup> poststructural, deconstructivist, intersectional, Black, Mestiza, postcolonial, decolonial, cross border, transnational, indigenous, urban immigrant feminism, queer, or transgender feminism. Considerable disputes, debates, conflicts, shared interests, and alliances within different strands of feminist thought point to another constitutive paradox. Schools, canons, labels, or strands of feminist thought cannot be neatly separated or definitively categorized. "To be sure this list of labels is incomplete and highly contestable."<sup>11</sup> Feminist thought therefore is also marked by a resistance to a labelling categorization and not only by a resistance to definition, which I pointed out earlier. Even though highly contestable, such categories are nonetheless useful tools in understanding the multiplicity politics and orientations at work within feminist thought. They also allow for an understanding of how these different strands of thought not only create productive debates and conflicts within feminism, but also sharing, crossings, and all kinds of intellectual exchange and movements that can actually lead to new associations and transgressions. Taken together, these activities nourish the ongoing transformation of feminist thought itself. And, as Rosemarie Tong states: "They signal to the public that feminism is not a monolithic ideology and that all feminists do not think alike."<sup>12</sup>

Turning now to curating, I will follow feminist thought's method and raise the following question: What is curating? Recent proliferation of theoretical discourse on and historiographic narration of curating clearly shows that this question has been raised in a number of publications.<sup>13</sup> And, having studied feminist thought, we come to see a paradox or contradiction at work. Curating chooses to resist definition. Curating seeks to change and expand how its past definitions are understood, what its current definitions are and what its future definitions might become. Yet, in order to be seen as a specific "area of knowledge,"<sup>14</sup> curating and curatorial thought are in need of some definition. And, I would like to add, such definitions are in fact helpful in order to make the (ongoing) transformations—which in fact often actively contest and transgress earlier models or definitions of what curating is—better understood. Therefore, the question also drives the need for specificity and for contours, as I pointed out earlier with regard to feminist thought. Again, it is a paradox that lies at the heart of curatorial thought. This paradox unfolds as follows: the desire to be understood as a specific area of knowledge and the desire to not to be tied down by restraining and narrowing definitions. This also offers fertile ground for a wide range of different approaches manifest in curating. These have not solidified into long-standing categories such as the ones I named with regard to feminist thought. Nonetheless, I will attempt to sketch out different strands that are to be discerned within contemporary curating. I will do so firstly according to perspectives taken up by curators, secondly according to historic periodisation and fields of artistic production, and thirdly according to sites where curators work. With regard to the perspectives employed, these strands are activist, critical, conceptual, discursive, educational, feminist, global, involved, post-colonial, Black America, Chicana, global, or transnational curating/curatorial thought. With regard to historic periodisation and fields of artistic productions, these strands can be named as follows: modern art, contemporary art, video art, installation art, performance art, conceptual art, postconceptual art, or digital and new media art curator. With regard to sites of work, these strands can be named as follows: museum, biennale, festival, gallery, education, public space, community-based, urban, village, or theory curator. Admittedly, such a list is unfinished and risks the danger of oversimplification. On one hand, curating/curatorial thought is prone to introducing such self-labelling in order to work out specificities, differences, and positions. On the other hand, curating/curatorial thought is very likely to resist such labelling as restrictive and reductive. Such (albeit tentative and preliminary) labelling categorizations are seen as helpful tools to understand the different politics and orientations at work within the emerging differences of curating. They also allow opposing and conflicting perspectives to be traced, as well as the emergence of productive dialogues and intellectual transgressions. This process of differentiation into a wide number of specific strands within curating points to the emergence of a new area of knowledge pointed out earlier. This area of knowledge is marked by the differences within. I want to return now to what Rosemarie Tong stated about feminist thought and use it this recitation and change to describe curating. "They signal to the public that 'curating/curatorial thought' (my change) is not a monolithic ideology and that all 'curators' (my change) do not think alike."<sup>15</sup>

Even though definitions run the risk of reductionism and oversimplification, they are, to a certain degree, necessary to arrive at differentiation and to achieve nuanced intellectual specificity. Even though feminist thought and curating tend to resist definitions, it is of importance to not end up with, as already stated before, a "critical stance without critique."<sup>16</sup> Even though it can be understood via feminist thought that curating also cannot be described by narrowly defined schools, naming different strands points to the complex historic and still ongoing processes of differentiation and self-transformation. In addition, such a practice of naming can

also be understood as self-chosen, self-identifying, self-labelling, self-positioning, or self-organising. With regard to the methods used in this study, attention is paid to the anti-monolithic or non-monolithic. This places the focus on working out paradoxes and contradictions as well as differences and specificities. Equally, the potential for dialogues, crossings, exchanges, and movements between different times, sites, and perspectives as provided by feminist thought is central to historicising, theorising, and practicing curating. What can be learned from studying feminist thought is to turn to the question yet again. I have raised the what-is-question. Now I will proceed with the what-does-question. What does feminist thought do? What does doing feminist thought imply? What does curatorial thought do? What does doing curatorial thought imply? Seen through the lens of doing, thought is a specific social practice. Susan Archer Mann emphasises "the social agency involved in theory production – how constructing theory is a social practice and a form of labor."<sup>17</sup> She also points out that "Feminism is not simply a body of thought: it is a politics directed toward social change."<sup>18</sup> I follow this line of thinking, that thought is a specific social practice, and want to underline its importance for both feminist and curatorial thought. While the political claim has been constitutive to the emergence of feminist thought, the same cannot be said about curating. While feminist thought can look back onto an historical claim of emerging out of the feminist movement(s) and being directed toward social change, the situation for the latter is quite different. Curating's beginnings did not emerge out of political movements or social movements, yet curating is part of (critically addressing) the politics of how art and culture are produced, shown, mediated, analysed, and made public. Curating cannot be understood without the concrete historical conditions of which they are a part. Therefore, I not only locate issues of politics and social change in feminist thought, but also understand curating and curatorial thought as always already profoundly entangled with political and social questions. It is specifically the feminist turn in curating that foregrounds how feminist thought needs to address the politics of curating. Feminist thought provides the methods of analysis in working out how curating is responding to specific historic conditions and how curating does or does not address the social changes wrought by feminism within these specific historic conditions. Curating as a social practice is part of the historic conditions which feminism seeks to change. As I have shown via Mann, Massey, and Meskimmon, feminist thought provides the tools to confront uncritical chronology and to activate critical cartography.

Feminist thought relies on opening up, over again and again, both of these questions: What is feminist thought and what does feminist thought do? I will put this method to use in order to approach and question curating. The resistance to definition and to categorization, another legacy of feminist thought, opens up the potentials for ongoing questioning, considerable conflicts, transformation, and future change. The resistance to processes of stabilizing via definition is to be discerned in feminist thought. This can be used in analysing curatorial practice to understand both such a resistance and processes of differentiation. Feminist thought has historically emerged as a politics. Curatorial practice has emerged as a distinctly cultural practice. In historical terms, it was bound up with hegemonic logics of collecting, conserving, categorizing, producing, representing, and mediating art and culture. Institutions like the museum, or exhibition formats like the biennale, are powerful expressions of representative and dominant models of culture. It was via feminist critique in the 1960s and 1970s that curating was confronted with its own hegemonic and exclusionary politics. It has also been via feminist critique and feminist practice that curating has undergone considerable changes since the 1960s and 1970s. While the first is by now well understood in museum studies and curatorial historiography, the latter still warrants future

research and thorough exploration. Looked at from this vantage point of critiquing hegemonic power, feminist thought is useful for the analysis of curatorial practice as an inherently social practice with regard to its (changing) politics. And, this is my key point, feminist thought is much needed when it comes to gaining deeper insights into how curating is addressing and making public the social changes wrought by feminism, feminist thought, and feminist art.

### **On the Chronopolitics of Feminist Historiography**

As noted, feminist thought is not monolithic, and feminist historiography seeks to mobilize strategic critical resistance against the logic of linear progress. Paradox and contradiction, as I will show in more detail later, are part of feminist thought's legacy and of its current transformations. Yet, there is a troubling tendency to be made out within the historiography of feminism as an object of study. Both a large number of feminist movements and the body of most diverse feminist thought have been written into what is now a rather canonical history hinging on chronopolitically charged terms of before versus after, pioneering versus obsolete, older versus younger. Crucial to my chronopolitical critique of feminist thought's historiography are art historian Griselda Pollock's work on paradox and Sarah Bracke's and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's re-reading of contradiction via feminist standpoint theory.

What follows now is an outline mapping the conventional narratives of feminist thought. I will move through a number of different yet closely related narratives. As I move through these narratives, I will point out a number of chronopolitical implications and contradictions. The history of feminism has been written as a history of waves: First Wave, Second Wave, Third Wave, and, most recently, Fourth Wave. The history of feminism has also been written in terms of pre and post: prefeminist, feminist, postfeminist. Both the waves model and the pre/post model suggest a "progressive chronology."<sup>19</sup> Susan Archer Mann points to the linearity implied in the wave model. "No doubt, many histories of U.S. feminism have employed a linear, wave approach."<sup>20</sup> Linear constructions of historical time are inherently Eurocentric. They share common legacies with modernism, modernity, progress, and universal history. Amongst many other things, feminist historiography sought to actively intervene into such concepts of historical time, to deconstruct and challenge its enduring hegemonic underpinnings, and to transgress such concepts and the resulting models of constructing history via linear narrations. First-wave feminism commonly refers to movements around suffrage and to activities taking place through the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Second wave and third wave on the contrary are separated by a mere decade. "The second wave denotes the resurgence of women's organizing in the 1960s and ends (...) with the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1982. The third wave refers to the resurgence of feminist activism in the 1990s, especially by younger feminists who came of age after the second wave." The wave approach suggests a causal linearity that is very much following a chronopolitical logic owed to modernist ideas of progress. It is exactly such a progress-centric model of historiographic narration that feminist thought rejects and deconstructs. Yet, with feminism as the object of historical study, this progress-based narrative has become canonical and hegemonic. Therefore, Mann argues for a more nuanced model of feminism's historiography. She offers a number of reasons why the waves model is problematic.

First, wave approaches too often downplay the importance of individual and small-scale collective actions as well as indirect and covert acts. Second, they ignore feminist writings and activities before and between different waves.

Third, wave approaches generally draw attention to the common themes that unify each wave and focus on the largest and most hegemonic feminist organizations. Hence, they tend to obscure the diversity of competing feminisms within each wave as well as the contributions of more politically radical feminists and of women activists and theorists marginalized within each wave.<sup>21</sup>

I share Mann's thoughts on such necessary problematisation. I conceive feminist thought as historically and geographically situated. Therefore, more nuanced concepts and more detailed research with regard to individual and small-scale actions, uncommon or marginal themes, and competing positions are not only welcome, but a necessity.

This text is dedicated to the study of *The International Dinner Party in Feminist Curatorial Thought*. *The International Dinner Party* project was originally conceived by Suzanne Lacy as a tribute to her mentor Judy Chicago. *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago opened on March 14, 1979. During the exhibition opening at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the *International Dinner Party* was performed by Lacy. *The Dinner Party* is considered a powerful and controversial icon of feminist art and by extension a symbol of second-wave feminism. *The International Dinner Party* both shares, and as I seek to show, transgresses the legacy constructed by the historiographic operations at work in the wave model. Therefore, it is of importance to understand how the wave model operates. This offers the basis for working out how *The International Dinner Party* is conventionally situated in historical terms. *The International Dinner Party* is constituted via complex relations within a network of many different individual feminist activists and artists, but also feminist groups and organizations. Therefore, both actions representing different scales, ranging from the individual to organizations, are of interest to this study. In addition, the individuals and organizations contributing to *The International Dinner Party* are situated in regional and geographical contexts differing widely from each other. This confirms that all the critical points raised in Susan Archer Mann's problematisation need to be taken up in research and theorisation. Yet, I want to argue that a "cultural feminist analysis"<sup>22</sup> of *The International Dinner Party* and its situating in trans-historic feminist curatorial thought also needs to critically challenge the foundational assumptions of the waves narrative. The waves model suggests development and progress. It is this progress-centric model of historiographic narration that feminist thought sought to reject and deconstruct. Therefore, it is important to understand the waves narrative in historical terms, yet to not reproduce its chronopolitical hegemony. Prefeminist or protofeminist, feminist, and postfeminist suggest a similar progress-centric and linear conception of historic development. Feminism has come to be understood through this specific, chronopolitically charged terminology and ordering. Not only does such an ordering construct a linearity, it also suggests that one model replaces the other, or put differently, makes it obsolete. The differences between pre- and post- or between different waves are therefore not only temporal, but ideological. They are commonly understood as ideologically split, especially between second wave and third wave feminism or feminism and postfeminism. Meskimmon's critical cartography is helpful to recognize that chronology and ideology are complexly connected with geographies and geopolitics. Such a linear ordering implies the "displacement of one set of approaches by others."<sup>23</sup> This means first of all that the waves model was applied outside of the U.S. context from where it originated. It means secondly that this displacement has to be critically analysed with regard to what is referred to as centres and margins. Revisiting March 14, 1979, the evening of *The International Dinner Party*, a moment in time commonly fully associated with second-wave femi-

nist thinking, will necessarily entail confronting inherent hegemonic assumptions and working out nuanced differences of historic feminist thought and movement. I aim to critically address the chronopolitical implications and to actively address the paradox that feminist historiography has critically deconstructed meta-narratives, progress, and linearity, yet the historical study of feminism has, to some degree, reproduced such concepts. I will take up Mann's points of paying attention to individual and small-scale collective actions as well as to uncommon actions in order to better understand the diversity of feminisms articulated via the messages of *The International Dinner Party*. I engage with "situated knowledges and politics of location"<sup>24</sup> throughout my analysis. Therefore I will link the points raised by Mann with Meskimmon's concept of critical cartography in order to counteract both a progress-centric wave-based model and a centre (U.S.)-to-margin-based chronological model.

### Questions and Paradoxes

Let me now turn once more to asking a question. I have already pointed out that asking what feminism is, or what feminist art is, or what feminist thought is, can actually be considered a paradigmatic feminist method. I cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of the question as method. First, to keep the question open as a method implies to theoretically bear the consequences that it can in fact not be answered. Or put differently, that it is part of the question's method to resist closure and to uphold this ongoing process of producing new answers. Second, it is not only necessary to reopen the question again and again from a critical and deconstructivist theoretical perspective, as noted before, but also because of the transformations of the concrete historical conditions that need to be addressed. Looked at through the lens of the question as method, feminism is based upon this paradox of never fully answering and, at the same time, never ceasing to ask over and over again. In particular, I will now focus the histories of art histories and their pivoting on the question as method and the paradox as constitutive. In so doing, I aim to transfer insights gained from art histories' critical historiographic project to my analysis of *The International Dinner Party* with regard to curating's historiography. In her essay, *The Politics of Theory: Generations and Geographies in Feminist Theory and the Histories of Art Histories*, Griselda Pollock activates the tradition of the question as feminist method.

The term 'feminist theory' has a wide currency now. But what is it? Does it mean that there is a coherent perspective on all areas unified under the rubric feminism? [...] Raising the question catapults us from the neatly ordered universe/university of intellectual knowledge with this clear disciplinary division into a field of practice. The feminist question—the key question of feminism—brings down the load bearing walls which compartmentalize academic knowledge to reveal the structure of sexual difference by which society and culture is riven, showing that all disciplines are impregnated with the ideological premises of a sex/gender system.<sup>25</sup>

Following Pollock and many other feminist scholars and theorists, an important aim for feminist thought is therefore to transform compartmentalized intellectual knowledge production into a field of practice. Feminist knowledge practices pivot around the social and ideological implications of sexual difference. Turning knowledge production into a field of practice is important for my understanding of curating's underpinnings. A feminist turn in curating also addresses the social and ideological implications of sexual difference. For this reason, curatorial knowledge production can be understood as a practice, and, as I want to suggest, curatorial knowledge production as a feminist practice. I will return to this in more detail later

in this essay. For now, I want to emphasize that, from a feminist standpoint, practicing knowledge includes the activities of dis/ordering, un/learning, inter/vening, and moving inter/disciplinarily. This is in line with opening the question of what feminism is and what feminism does. Feminist knowledge production also needs to extend such a practice of dis/ordering and inter/vening to the body of knowledge produced by feminist thought. Yet, in doing so, feminist thought ought to be careful not to repeat the ideological splitting and displacing of one set of approaches by others based upon a progress-centric chronopolitical argument of before/after, obsolete/new, earlier/future-oriented. "Feminism demands that certain issues remain in view, and it functions as a resistance to any tendency to stabilize knowledge or theory around fictions of the generically human or the monolithically universal or any other androcentric, racist, sexist or ageist myth of imperial Western culture and its (often not so) radical discourses."<sup>26</sup> Such a movement of destabilizing needs to be practised not only with regard to the monolithic regimes to which Pollock critically points, but also with regard to by now hegemonic and canonical chronopolitical regimes within feminism itself.

Then, I would assert that feminism signifies a set of positions, not an essence; a critical practice not a doxa; a dynamic and self-critical response and intervention, not a platform. It is the precarious product of a paradox. Seeming to speak in the name of women, feminist analysis perpetually deconstructs the very term around which it is politically organised. (...) Yet there has been no linear progress from early thoughts to mature theories. Rather we have a synchronic configuration of debates within feminism, all of which have something valuable to contribute to the enlarging feminist enterprise. Yet they are all, none the less, caught up in the very systems of sexual difference they critique. The issue becomes one of how to make that paradox the condition of radical practice.<sup>27</sup>

Both, synchronic configuration and the paradox as a condition of radical practice are of methodological importance for my study of *Suzanne Lacy's International Dinner Party in Feminist Curatorial Thought*. Even though I am committed, as I pointed out earlier, to critical cartography and politics of location, I am equally interested in mobilizing synchronic configurations, both over times and in time. In bringing together cultural feminist analysis, archival studies, feminist art history, critical feminist theories, philosophy, curatorial research and curatorial practices, I seek to counteract the academic compartmentalization in order to destabilize intellectual knowledge as field of practice. This process brings together feminist cultural analysis and curating in order to create new insights into feminist artmaking and into emerging feminist histories of curating's histories by being attentive to *The International Dinner Party's* contributors' situated knowledge and by associating affinities and links within a historiography of feminist curating.

Following Pollock, I refuse a linear succession from earlier feminist practice and theory to a mature feminist practice and theory. This follows a line of feminist thought that is aimed against monolithic and universal(izing) structures of hegemonic Western thought and culture. I join Pollock's critical analysis of the histories of art history, which offers a model for critically analysing histories of curating's history, with Sarah Bracke's and María Puig de la Bellacasa's re-working of feminist standpoint theory. In historical terms, standpoint theory came into being during the same decade *The International Dinner Party* took place. An important example for standpoint theory from this period is Dorothy E. Smith's 1974 *Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology*. Both the feminist activist art practice of *The International Dinner Party* and standpoint theory share the active questioning of

power relations and seek to take the production of knowledge into women's own hands in order to turn it into a political practice. Activist feminist art practice and feminist research practice converge in the strategy (if not the practice) of consciousness-raising to "produce oppositional and shared consciousnesses in oppressed groups—to create oppressed peoples as collective 'subjects' of research rather than only as objects of others' observation (...)."28 Both *The International Dinner Party* and standpoint theory share the historical horizon of second-wave feminism. Again, it is of importance to critically point to the chronopolitical regime at work. "The main critique on standpoint we are confronted with is, roughly stated: standpoint feminism is modern and essentialist and left little space to other parameters of analysis, such as "race," ethnicity, class, and sexuality, facilitated by postmodernisms."<sup>29</sup> For my pursuit of an anti-monolithic project within feminist thought and a politics that actively seeks to re/disorient canonical orderings of feminist thought as a passage from earlier essentialist and collectivity-oriented to anti-essentialist and individualist-based approaches, joining Pollock's arguments with Bracke's and de la Bellacasa's work is crucial. Speaking of the paradox, Pollock argues that it shaped the period of feminist thought from the late 1970s to the late 1990s.

This paradox has shaped the history of the last twenty years of feminist practice, which can perhaps be characterized by the passage from essence (a strong sense of identity of woman and the collectivity of women) to difference (a more anguished recognition not only of that which divides and undoes the collectivity of women, but also the structural condition of the term 'Woman' as an affect of psycho-symbolic systems which produce and differentiate subjectivities across the formations of class, race, and sexuality).<sup>30</sup>

In my attempt to follow not only the logic, but also the history of the paradox, I reach an impasse. The paradox's history shares the chronopolitical regime of the ideological split governing the progress-centric narration of the wave model. This is marked by a constellation of earlier/later and, as described by Pollock here, by essence/difference. Critical cartography cannot solve this problem of using the paradox as a condition for critical practice, yet avoiding a linear chronology. Therefore, I turn to Sarah Bracke's and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's "generational" discussion of standpoint theory. They express their hope that standpoint theory's "constant reformulation (...) through feminist practices of theory (...) perpetually challenges theoretical dichotomies, in particular modern/postmodern oppositions."<sup>31</sup> Their work presents a possibility to proactively work with the oppositions that are inherent to the chronopolitical regimes of progress and displacement within feminist thought. "As academics we have been raised as 'modernists' because we are supposed to *show that we know better* than those who came before us. As *feminist* academics, we feel we ought to resist this modernist attitude because we are aware that we do not know 'better than' but 'better with/because of' those who came before us."<sup>32</sup>

With Pollock I showed that feminist thought turns intellectual knowledge production into a field of practice that allows for synchronic configurations. Following Meskimmon, I showed how critical cartography makes chronopolitical regimes of progress understood within feminist thought. Therefore, special attention [now] needs to be paid to the politics of location emphasized by Lykke. Following Bracke and Puig de la Bellacasa, I seek to show how orientations via dichotomies, which play out both with regard to chronopolitics and to the politics of location, can be politically addressed within a field of practice. Bracke and Puig de la Bellacasa intro-

duce a line of thought that suggests “better with/because of” rather than “better than.”<sup>33</sup> This opens up the potential of a very different chronopolitical orientation towards the past. It does by no means obviate the need for a critical revisiting of the past nor the necessary deconstruction of monolithically universal and Western-centric historiographic knowledge production, but it avoids the ideological split of before/after or obsolete/current that functions as an impasse in much of feminist thought’s history. ‘Better with/because of’ opens up an envisioning of different cross-temporal and transgressive affinities, or to put it differently, synchronic alignments. It also creates the possibility of envisioning how opening the traditional question of what feminism is and what feminist practice does allows it to no longer be governed by the chronopolitical imperative of “better than,” but by a continuous dialogue and debate based upon “better with.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Binaries/Dichotomies**

I have demonstrated that feminist thought actively engages with binaries and dichotomies. These are not only part of feminist thought’s legacy but also part of ongoing debates and discussions. Binaries and dichotomies are part of the paradox that constitutes feminist thought as a form of knowledge production considered a field of practice and a field of practicing theory politically. Binaries and dichotomies are equally part of the chronopolitical ordering of feminist thought’s canonical historiography. Before/after is conventionally equated with an ideological split and a move toward progress. Before/after is constitutive for the displacement narrative. Even though the displacement narrative supposedly overcomes binary structures central to Western thought, it is, paradoxically, itself governed by yet another binary: the before/after binary. This closely resembles a progress-based model of advancement. Binaries express power relations and hierarchies.

Examples include the division of sexes into male/female or of sexualities into heterosexual/homosexual. While these categories are used to define and distinguish one from the other, they are not just different; they are unequal; they entail hidden hierarchies where one side is privileged and the other is viewed as abject or lesser. There is also a sinister tendency to link up the lesser side of the binary with other demeaning or demonizing terms. For example, male/female is often linked to rational/irrational, culture/nature, order/chaos, and so forth.<sup>35</sup>

Binaries, and dichotomies, are part of the politics of location. ‘Here’, equated with U.S. or Western feminist thought, is understood as a location of origin, a chronopolitically charged “before”. “There”, equated with non-Western feminist thought, then becomes “after”. Here/there is equated with centre/margin or centre/periphery. Here/there has commonly been understood as unequal. Bound up with the chronopolitical regime, this here/there model has been conventionally turned into a U.S.-centric or Western-centric hegemony of feminist thought which then spread to other parts of the world. This model can therefore be expressed in a binary that is spatially and temporally constructed as follows: here-before/there-after. This reveals that U.S. or Western feminist thought has not operated outside the hegemonic chronopolitical regimes governing modernity’s relations between Western and non-Western societies with regard to temporal value judgements such as advanced or developing.<sup>36</sup> Even though feminist thought actively challenged modernism and modernity, it is therefore paradoxically bound up with the power politics of its binary thought structure on many levels. It is not only important to challenge the binary between Western and non-Western, but equally the construction of a monolithic West and a monolithic non-West. Displacement narratives therefore not only concern the temporalities structuring feminist thought’s histori-

ographies, but spatialities expressed through specific locations as well. To complicate matters further, the wave model has to be joined with the before/after model in order to critically examine the chronopolitically charged hierarchical logics and power relations. At times, “before” is equated with first-wave feminism, which is rediscovered and praised for its engagement with civil and political rights. At times, “before” is equated with second-wave feminism, which is dismissed on grounds of essentialism and lack of attention paid to race-based, class-based, ethnic, religious, or immigrant diversity. At times, “before” is equated with first-wave feminism and dismissed on grounds of privileging the right to vote over economic or social rights. At times, “before” is equated with second-wave feminism and rediscovered in its dimensions of social reproduction, standpoint, and eco-feminism. Some feminists argue for a twenty-first century fourth-wave feminism.<sup>37</sup> At times, “before” is equated with third-wave feminism, which is criticised for its failure to establish a coherent feminist movement. At times, “before” is equated with third-wave feminism, which is rediscovered for its deconstruction of binaries. “The post-structuralist generation should be given credit for loosening up the binary scheme of dialectical thought and confronting the issue of negativity and power in a more multi-directional, embodied and embedded manner.”<sup>38</sup> Fourth-wave feminism is, yet again, the dis/continuation of the wave model. The previous waves are overcome, yet the waves model itself is continued. Postcolonial debate, critical positions by women of colour feminists both living in the global South and the global North, transgenderism, as well as the changes wrought by social media in activism, politics, and networking, are some of the features considered central to the emergence of current fourth-wave feminism.

Paradoxically, before/after is the central binary that remains, despite feminist thought’s deconstructing of and loosening up of binary thought. Amelia Jones has pointed out ways of critical engagement with the binary legacy of much of Western thought, and by extension, much of Western art.<sup>39</sup> Jones proposes a “queer feminist durationality.”<sup>40</sup> She elaborates: “I suggest that feminism must take on queer theoretical insights (particularly the dissolution of binary thinking and the putting in motion of meaning) as well as the insights of Marxian, anti-racist and postcolonial theory in order to accommodate the new global world order.” And, as I want to add, with regard to my study of *The International Dinner Party*, a further extension to such an approach with regard to the chronopolitical regimes revealed by Meskimmon’s critical cartography beyond the historic moment of the new global world order, toward a critical engagement with both the past and the future. Far from disregarding the impact of binary thought, Jones acknowledges the reverberations of its power relations. Therefore, she proposes a (self-)critical feminist engagement that thinks “beyond or away from the binary,”<sup>41</sup> and she does so by opening up a question which is, as I have shown before, very much part of feminist thought’s tradition.

How can we think beyond or away from the binary, or more explicitly put, how can we understand images and performances in more nuanced ways as articulating potential identificatory structures that are not simplistically binary? How can we explore these flows of inter-relationality through visual practice in ways that still convey a feminist politics—an attention to inequities among subjects relating to gender broadly construed as experienced and understood through class, national, ethnic, religious, and other modes of identification?<sup>42</sup>

Amelia Jones carefully opens up possible associations and alignments between the more recent emergence of a queer feminist durationality and the

longstanding tradition of feminist politics. She cautions that there is the risk of binary simplicity, and therefore emphasizes the need for critical deconstruction. Yet, she equally cautions to dismiss identification entirely, and in extension identity politics. For that reason, Jones suggests to work critically with both the dangers and potentials of identificatory structures. Looked at through the lens of chronopolitical regimes, Jones carefully navigates different waves of feminist temporalities and proposes new alignments via the temporal category of durationality. She suggests ways of critical engagement activated by 'away and beyond' as well as new alignments activated by 'inter, trans, and between.' This is of methodological importance for my research and my cultural feminist analysis of the issues raised by *The International Dinner Party*.

The binary before/after is very much part of movements of displacement and advancement/development and their respective value judgments. Before/after governs much of feminist thought's historiography and is actively challenged by concepts such as queer feminist durationality and better with/because of. In her book *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Thought*, Clare Hemmings offers a precise analysis of how narratives about Western feminist theory are constructed. Hemmings addresses the politics at work with regard to recurrent tropes that can be found in the historiographic narratives of academic Anglo-European feminist theory. She differentiates between three different modes of storytelling in the narratives that are to be discerned in essays published in feminist journals such as *Signs*, *Feminist Review*, and *Feminist Theory*. These three modes are progress (p. 31-58), loss (p. 59-94) and return (p. 95-130). Progress aims to leave behind essentialism. Loss laments the absence of a current feminist movement. Return suggests that, "We can combine the lessons of postmodern feminism with the materiality of embodiment and structural inequalities to move on from the current and theoretical impasse."<sup>43</sup> Taken together, progress, loss, and return offer a model to understand how the before/after dichotomy is activated and re-negotiated. Hemmings' analysis is of importance in working out chronopolitical pitfalls and in understanding better just how chronopolitically charged any historiography of feminist thought is. In historical terms, *The International Dinner Party* is part of the concrete conditions of the year 1979 and can thus be considered part of second-wave feminism. Such a historiographic ordering bears the danger of the project being dismissed on grounds of essentialism. (= progress) This could also lead to its romanticization or glorification because of the project's representation of a celebratory moment of a worldwide feminist movement. (= loss) It could also lead to using the lessons gained from the project in contemporary feminist artistic and curatorial practice. (= return). In order to counteract these chronopolitical dangers and to actively address its paradoxes, I will use a research-based approach to the contributors to *The International Dinner Party*. This approach relies, as I explained earlier, on the politics of location and situated knowledge in order to counteract a hegemonic chrono-cartography of here-before (U.S. or Western feminism) and there-after (non-U.S. or non-Western feminism). Special attention will be paid to demonstrating how *The International Dinner Party* foregrounds concerns that resist categorization via the wave model, and therefore allow for a more nuanced understanding of feminist thought by way of avoiding simplifying dichotomic constellations between before/after and here/there. My research-based approach toward the feminist subjects who contributed to the making of *The International Dinner Party* seeks to counter-act the here-before/there-after binary. Central to my feminist cultural analysis of the issues raised by *The International Dinner Party* is a theoretical alignment between queer feminist durationality and 'better with/because of.'

### Associations and Transgressions

So far, I have firmly placed my approach to method in a tradition of feminist thought, and have tried to use it to approach curating in a theoretical and historical framework. Equally, I have opened a critical perspective on feminist thought's historiographic project with regard to the chronopolitical regime by which it is governed. I am activating the anti-monolithic intent expressed in feminist thought. Yet, I am actively counteracting the structural binary of advancement and obsolescence that is part of feminist thought's conventional historiographic narratives. Counteracting this chronopolitical binary of advancement/obsolescence is a task to be more fully theoretically acknowledged and addressed within the feminist historiographic enterprise. I bring this counteracting to the project of curating's historiography. And I invoke again the method of the question. Feminism is the question, I suggested. By association, I want to suggest, curating is the question. In her 2001 essay *Survey for Art and Feminism*, Peggy Phelan returns to the question of feminism within the context of a book that is curatorially organized across several generations of artists.

The troublesome question emerges: what is feminism? When faced with such an amorphous and ambivalent term, the shrewd often answer that it must be plural—not feminism but feminisms. [...] The ideological stakes in the question 'what is feminism?' have often led to increasingly sophisticated but, it must be admitted also, increasingly evasive responses. I prefer a bold, if broad definition: feminism is the conviction that gender has been, and continues to be, a fundamental category for the organization of culture. Moreover, the pattern of that organization usually favours men over women.<sup>44</sup>

Opening the question again is not only a feminist tradition and a theoretical operation. It is equally a historiographic operation that pays close attention to the transformationality of theories and practices bound up with the concrete historic conditions of any given time in any given location. Therefore critical cartography, situated knowledge, and politics of location are of theoretical importance to my feminist cultural analysis. Through Griselda Pollock, I introduced the paradox of being bound up with the very system of sexual difference one critiques and how to make this paradox the very condition of radical practice. I would now like to proceed by way of joining questions and paradoxes and binaries/dichotomies with associations and transgressions. In the already quoted essay, *Survey*, Peggy Phelan also writes: "Alluringly open, deceptively simple, art and feminism is a seductive subject. Among the most provocative words for critical writing, the conjunction and compels an associative logic."<sup>45</sup> I fully agree with the potentials of an associative logic and want to foreground that this very logic is open to questions, paradoxes, and renegotiations of binaries and dichotomies. And/and multiplies this associative logic and directs its interest to the space that is opened up by the mark of the forward slash that, theoretically speaking, can make itself part of the questions and paradoxes. Therefore, the forward slash, or whack,<sup>46</sup> is of methodological importance to my approach in order to understand how feminist thought works and moves. I aim to work conceptually as well as methodologically with the forward slash or whack, "/" . This becomes a tool of thinking in order to activate this line, this border, or ultimately this space that both separates and connects. Taken together, the conjunction and as well as the forward slash motivate transnational as well as transhistorical associations. Based upon association and transgression, I turn to the theoretical and practical concept of transnational feminism as developed by Charda Talpade Mohanty. Suzanne Lacy's *The International Dinner Party* project motivated the contributions of more than 2000 women organizing 200 dinners. Taken together, the 200 different dinners can be understood as an ad-hoc community originating through the support system of the 1979 women's movements. Local

women's organizations, individual artists, or feminist communities organized dinners. Therefore, the framework of transnational feminism is of importance to understand both the possible associations between women around the globe and the complexities and contradictions with regard to the politics of location and situated knowledge as discussed earlier. Mohanty uses these terms "imagined communities" and "communities of resistance" not because they are not "real" but because it suggests commitment and potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries.<sup>47</sup> Understood as such, community is not an essentializing given or a ready-made localizable entity. I associate *The International Dinner Party* with the concepts of both an imagined community and a community of resistance. In historical hindsight, this community can be joined by accessing their messages, by tracing the cultural and political legacy of change produced by this community of women, and the ad-hoc March 14, 1979 feminist archive they created. I use Mohanty's concept of imagined communities and communities of resistance to counteract notions of essentializing women's communities, which is very much part of how second-wave feminism has been historicized and criticized. This is conceptually part of my reading conventional feminist thought's historiography against its grain.

The idea of imagined community is useful because it leads us away from essentialist notions of Third World feminist struggles, suggesting political rather than biological or cultural bases for alliance. It is not color or sex that constructs the ground for these struggles. Rather, it is the way we think about race, class, and gender—the political links we choose to make among and between struggles. Thus, potentially, women of all colors (including white women) can align themselves with and participate in these imagined communities. However, clearly our relations to and centrality in particular struggles depend on our different, often conflictual, locations and histories.<sup>48</sup>

My research-based approach to a selected number of the different communities or individuals who hosted the 200 different dinners is owed to understanding their different locations and histories. Yet, I also seek to pay close attention to possible affinities based upon the politics of association. Therefore, association is understood both as a theoretical method and a political practice. The first follows Phelan's suggestion of an associative logic creating new, unexpected, and, at times, surprising constellations (something closely resembling curatorial constellations). The second understands associations politically and follows Mohanty: "Communities of resistance like imagined communities is a political definition, not an essentialist one."<sup>49</sup> Associating is thus understood as the political practice of producing and reproducing communities. "Community, then, is the product of work, of struggle."<sup>50</sup>

Peggy Phelan's suggestion of an associative logic led me to place *The International Dinner Party* in feminist curatorial thought. Amelia Jones' 1996 exhibition *Sexual Politics. Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* inspired the choice of my title *Suzanne Lacy's International Dinner Party in Feminist Curatorial Thought*. In her exhibition catalogue essay, "Sexual Politics: Feminist Strategies, Feminist Conflicts, Feminist Histories," Amelia Jones emphasizes that she aims to "work within a historical and theoretical (rather than aesthetic or monographic) framework."<sup>51</sup> Both Jones' curatorial work and her essay writing use a historical and theoretical framework. This strongly inspired my approach toward *The International Dinner Party*. By way of using a historical and theoretical framework, I placed *The International Dinner Party* in its multi-locational historical context and in feminist curatorial thought, both historically and currently. Central to my interest are the project's social politics, or put differently, the politics of communities of resistance or imagined com-

munities. Equally central to my interest is the project's complex constellation between activism, art-making, feminism, political struggles, curating, and the institution of the museum. I came to understand the different tasks performed by artist Suzanne Lacy as curatorial in nature. Lacy acted as artist, inviter, feminist community organizer, and bridge between the art world and women's/feminist communities, between women's and feminists' intellectual, convivial, social, and political work and the institution of the museum. Therefore, not only the critical transgression of the waves model is of importance to my analysis, but also curatorial and theoretical transgressions of hegemonic narratives of the history of curating. This history, for the better part, has been written from the perspective of curators-as-authors. This, in fact, revives the monographic model of historical narration. Interestingly enough, the art historical convention of the monographic model very much suits the neoliberal model of star curators.

(...) [T]he shift from the mechanically chronological display to the thematic or monographic exhibition all dramatise the role of the curator in the mediation of art. The visibility of figures like Harald Szeemann or, more recently, Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Nicolas Bourriaud as the authors of signature exhibition practices is another effect of the evolution of the neoliberal museum and its search for constant innovation and dynamism, and is a development that has produced a voluminous literature on the curator.<sup>52</sup>

Again, it is the chronopolitical regime of progress and advancement, this time in the guise of originality, innovation, dynamism, or "novelty,"<sup>53</sup> that governs much of curating's historiography. Dimitrakaki and Perry propose to "move beyond the normative distinction between a mothers' and a daughters' generation (...)."<sup>54</sup> Based upon this suggestion, it is my aim to make a critical contribution to counteracting the chronopolitical regime of advancement/obsolescence within feminist historiography's waves model and the art historical monographic/neoliberal star-curator model dominating much of curating's historiography. "There is in fact a long and continuous history of feminist curating that has tended to be submerged by the weight of the search for novelty."<sup>55</sup> I want to turn once more to Sarah Bracke's and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's 'better with/because of' to support my resistance against novelty. Novelty also tends to obscure that we build on the work of others in order to both associate (with) and transgress (beyond). I draw on Dorothee Richter's critical analysis of the curator's structural position with regard to modernism's artistic genius and neoliberalism's curatorial networker in order to understand curating from a feminist standpoint.

The figure of the curator (as a structural model) is in many ways a draft of a new post-Fordist accented authorship. This figure takes on in many ways, as I have expressed elsewhere, the paradigmatic attributes of the masculine mythos of "artistic genius", connects this with mobility and networking – and there you have the new role model for the Western post-industrial lifestyle.<sup>56</sup>

The structural model is, per Richter, embedded in a historiographic construction of genealogical filiation. The neoliberal dynamism and novelty is joined with the monographic narrative model that is multiplied via a father-son genealogy. Therefore, critical feminist historiography is key in terms of counteracting the discursive power relations of such constructions.

Just think of current publications, such as Hans Ulrich Obrist's (H.U.O.) *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Curating*. It may be symptomatic

that there is only one contribution by a woman in it, with the exception of a one-page foreword by April Lamm, in which the figure of the curator is identified in the same father-son line of Harald Szeemann – Pontus Hultén – Alexander Dorner – H.U.O. [...] Not only is the absence of women symptomatic, but above all, this discourse about curatorial activity returns to the subject of the “genius curator.”<sup>57</sup>

I draw on Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock's *Framing Feminism. Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985* to understand that much of feminist art making also led to exhibition organizing, exhibition making, and was in fact marked by collective curatorial energy and endeavour. I draw on exemplary curatorial models such as *Sexual Politics. Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History* by Amelia Jones to understand how feminist art history and theory impacts on curating and via curating. Another feminist way of approaching curatorial practice is offered by curator and critic Renée Baert's “who thinks through curating as a dialogical practice: exhibitions talking to other exhibitions.”<sup>58</sup> ‘Because of’ all of this feminist thought on which to build, I can move toward a different understanding of curating's practice and curatorial historiography. I seek to build upon feminist associations and transgressions with regard to curatorial thought. My critical refusal of the displacement narratives and the novelty imperative leads me to using an associative logic and a transgressive feminist imagination of linking *The International Dinner Party* with a possible extension toward curating's history, embodied in the salon model, and toward curating's future via feminist and queer feminist living archive practices and imagined communities of resistance.

In concluding, I want to return to my opening question: What if there is a feminist turn in curating? And I want to suggest that there is in fact a feminist turn in curating. I understand my feminist cultural analysis of *The International Dinner Party* that pairs a research-based approach with a theory-based approach to be part of this feminist turn in curating. Methodologically I build on feminist thought to historicise, theorise, and practise curating. I want to emphasize that it is my aim to counteract the chronopolitics that would proclaim such a turn as novelty-centric, and therefore ultimately bound up with the advancement/obsolescence binary. On the contrary, throughout my study I follow the earlier mentioned feminist method of ‘better with/because of’ those who came before us.<sup>59</sup> It is my firm conviction that a feminist turn in curating builds upon questions raised, answers suggested, and transgressions risked by many, many others. Because of these possible associations with the work of many others, such a feminist turn in curating will, throughout my study, be extended both toward the past and toward (possible) futures.

**Elke Krasny** is professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She was Guest Professor at the University of Bremen in 2006, at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg in 2013, and at the Vienna University of Technology in 2014. She received the Austrian Outstanding Artist Award for Women's Culture in 2011. In 2012 she was Visiting Scholar at the CCA, Canadian Centre for Architecture, in Montréal. Her work as a curator, critic, cultural theorist and urban researcher clearly shows her interest in urban transformation processes, the critical history of architecture, the politics of history, and the historiography of feminist curatorial practices. She edited a book on the history of self-organization *Hands-On Urbanism 1850-2012. The Right to Green* appeared in 2012 and her exhibition by the same name was shown at the Architecture Centre Vienna, the Museum for Contemporary Art Leipzig and included in the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2012. She curated the discursive event *Women's Movements: Feminist Agency. Intersections of Activism, Archiving, Art, Art History, Critical Research and Curating at Rotor*, association for contemporary art Graz. She

co-edited the 2013 volume *Women's: Museum. Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art*. Krasny did take part in the "Research Platform for Curatorial and Cross-disciplinary Cultural Studies, Practice-Based Doctoral Programme".

## Notes

**1** A number of exhibitions, conferences, research networks, symposia, and publications do suggest that we can in fact speak of a feminist turn in curating. Examples include the 2006 *Curatorial Strategies* issue of *n.paradoxa*: international feminist art journal, the 2006 essay *Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s*, 2007 exhibitions *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* and *Global Feminisms*. 2008 witnessed *La Mirada Iracunda/ The Furious Gaze* and 2009 witnessed *Gender Check. Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*. Publications include the 2006 essay *Issues in Feminist Curation: Strategies and Practices*, the 2010 volume of *Feminisms is Still Our Name: Seven Essays on Historiography and Curatorial Practices*, the 2013 *Politics in a Glass Case. Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions* and *Women's: Museum. Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art*, and *nparadoxa's A Chronological List of International Exhibitions on Women Artists and Feminist art Practices* (<http://www.ktpress.co.uk/pdf/feministartexhibitions.pdf>, last updated October 2014). Symposia and conferences include the 1999 *Dialogues and Debates Symposium on Feminist Positions in Contemporary Visual Arts* hosted by Künstlerinnenstiftung Höge, Bremen; the 2008 *The Furious Gaze* conference at Centro Cultural Montehermoso Kulturunea; the 2010 *Frauen: Museum: Zwischen Sammlungsstrategie und Sozialer Plattform (Women's: Museum: Between Collection Strategies and Social Platforms)* at the Vienna Library, the 2012 *Civil Partnerships? Queer and Feminist Curating* conference at Tate Modern London, the 2012 *The First Supper Symposium* at Handverkeren Kurs- og Konferansesenter, the 2014 *Curating Feminism Conference* hosted by Sydney College of the Arts, School of Letters, Arts and Media, and The Power Institute, University of Sydney, and *Feminist Turn in Curating* panel at the 2015 *Curating Everything (curating as symptom)* symposium at Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst Zurich.

**2** Susan Archer Mann, "Introduction," in *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), xvii.

**3** Marsha Meskimmon, "Chronology through Cartography: Mapping 1970s Feminist Art Globally," in *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, ed. Cornelia Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art and Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2007), 335.

**4** Meskimmon (2007), 335.

**5** Doreen Massey, "Imagining Globalization: Power-

Geometries of Time-Space," in *Global Futures: Migration, Environment and Globalization*, eds. Avtar Brah, Mary J. Hicman, and Máirtín Mac an Ghaill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 31. quoted in Meskimmon (2007), 324.

**6** Meskimmon (2007), 324.

**7** To give but a very few examples: *What is Feminism?* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1916; *What is Socialist Feminism?* by Barbara Ehrenreich, 1976; *What is Feminism?* edited by Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, 1986; *What is Feminist Art? Interview with Mary Kelly* by Rozsika Parker, 1977; *What is Feminist Art?* by Judy Chicago (no date); Chris Beasley, *What Is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory*, 1999; *What is Feminist in Feminist Theory?* by Cathrine Egeland, 2004; *What is Black Feminism?*, The Black International, 2014.

**8** Chris Beasley, *What Is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999) 21. Quoted in Susan Archer Mann (2010), 4.

**9** see Susan Archer Mann (2010), xvi.

**10** Rosemarie Tong, "Introduction. The Diversity of Feminist Thinking," in *Feminist Thought. A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2014), 1.

**11** Tong (2014), 1.

**12** Tong (2014), 1.

**13** There are a number of publications that in fact suggest a turn toward curating's history and a number of different journals establishing a discourse on curating. Examples include: Nathalie Heinrich and Michael Pollak, "From Museum Curator to Exhibition Auteur: Inventing a Singular Position," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 23–250; Peter White, ed., *Naming a Practice: Curatorial Strategies for the Future* (Banff: Banff Centre for the Arts, 1996); Barnaby Drabble and Dorothee Richter, eds., *Curating Degree Zero: An International Curating Symposium* (Nuremberg: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 1999); Susan Hiller and Sarah Martin, eds., *The Producers*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Department of Fine Art, 2000); Karsten Schubert, *The Curator's Egg: The Evolution of the Museum Concept from the French Revolution to the Present Day* (London: One Off Press, 2000); Catherine Thomas, *The Edge of Everything: Reflections on Curatorial Practice* (Banff: Banff Centre Press, 2000); Gavin Wade, ed., *Curating in the 21st Century* (Walsall: New Art Gallery Walsall; Wolverhampton: University of Wolverhampton, 2000); Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Interviews*, ed. Thomas Boutoux, vol. 1 (Milan: Charta, 2003); Christoph Tannert, Ute Tischler, and Künstlerhaus

Bethanien, eds., *MIB—Men in Black: Handbook of Curatorial Practice* (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 2004) Revolver, 2004; Hans-Joachim Müller, *Harald Szeemann: Exhibition Maker* (Munich: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2006); Paul O’Neill, *Curating Subjects* (London: Open Editions/de Appel, 2007); Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Brief History of Curating* (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2008); Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Curating\* But Were Afraid to Ask* (Berlin and New York: Sternberg Press, 2011); Dorothee Richter, “Artists and Curators as Authors, Competitors, Collaborators, or Teamworkers?” in *Cultures of the Curatorial*, eds. Beatrice von Bismarck, Jörn Schaffaff, and Thomas Weski (Berlin and New York: Sternberg Press, 2012); Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012); Paul O’Neill, Paul, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Cultures*, (Cambridge, Mass and London: MIT Press, 2012); Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Ways of Curating* (London: Faber & Faber, 2014) Jens Hoffman, *(Curating) From A to Z* (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2015)

Another route into writing curating’s history is provided by Afterall’s Exhibition Histories Series. “This series is the result of a research project developed by Afterall at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, in collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. The first publication was launched in 2010. In 2012, a new partnership was formed with the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College.” (Cornelia Butler and other authors, *From Coneptualism to Feminism: Lucy Lippard’s Number Shows 1969–74*, London: Afterall, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, 2012) flyleaf.

Journals on curating’s theory and practice, on curatorial discourse, and to some extent, curating’s histories include: *Curator The Museum Journal* (this peer-reviewed academic journal was founded in 1958); *Exhibitionist* (published by the National Association for Museum Exhibition since 1981); *Manifesta Journal. Around Curatorial Practice*, <http://www.manifestajournal.org/about> (founded in 2003); *OnCurating*, <http://www.on-curating.org> (this international journal focuses on curatorial practice and theory, it was founded in 2008); *The Exhibitionist*, <http://the-exhibitionist.com> (this journal by curators and for curators was founded in 2009); *Red Hook Journal*, <http://www.bard.edu/ccs/redhook/about-the-red-hook-journal/> (the Center for Curatorial Studies Bard started this journal in 2011); *Journal of Curatorial Studies* (this peer-reviewed print journal was started in 2012); *Artist as Curator*, <http://www.theartistascurator.org> (this publication project was started in 2013)

14 Dorothee Richter, “About On-Curating.Org, ONCURATING.org, issue 01 (2008): 1. Accessed May, 24, 2015. <http://www.on-curating.org/index.php/issue-1>.

[html#.VWq\\_EUuWHwl](http://html#.VWq_EUuWHwl).

15 Tong (2014), 1. Recitation is owed to Clare Hemmings who introduced this method in her 2011 book *Why Stories Matter. The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*.

16 Beasley (1999), 21.

17 Mann (2012), xvi.

18 Mann (2012), xviii.

19 Meskimmon (2007), 335.

20 Mann (2010), xvii.

21 Mann (2010), xvii–xviii.

22 Griselda Pollock, “A Lonely Preface,” in *Old Mistresses. Women, Art and Ideology*, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), xxiv.

23 Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 32.

24 Nina Lykke, *Feminist Studies. A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), xiii.

25 Griselda Pollock, “The Politics of Theory: Generations and Geographies in Feminist Theory and the Histories of Art Histories,” in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, ed. Griselda Pollock (London: Routledge, 1996), 4.

26 Pollock (1996), 4–5.

27 Pollock (1996), 4–5.

28 Sandra Harding, “Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophical and Scientific Debate,” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader. Intellectual & Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 3.

29 Sarah Bracke and María Puig de la Bellacasa, “Building Standpoints,” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader. Intellectual & Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 309.

30 Pollock (1996), 5.

31 Sarah Bracke and María Puig de la Bellacasa, “Building Standpoints,” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader. Intellectual & Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

32 Bracke and Puig de la Bellacasa (2004), 309.

33

34 To provide an example here. In *Depression. a Public Feeling*, Ann Cvetkovich describes the work of artists Sheila Pepe and Allyson Mitchell to emphasize that “their work does not celebrate the ‘third wave’ at the expense of the second wave.” (p.188) Cvetkovich states that artist Sheila “Pepe proactively names as her influences both Judy Chicago and Eva Hesse, slyly referring to them as the parents who didn’t speak to one another and expressing a conviction that work that can be simultaneously sexy and abstract.” (p. 182) see: Ann Cvetkovich, “The Utopia of Ordinary Habit. Crafting, Creativity, and Spiritual Practice,”

in *Depression: a Public Feeling*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 154–202.

**35** Susan Archer Mann (2010), 216.

**36** See: Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power” in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, ed. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert and Kenneth Thompson (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996), 185–225.

**37** Examples are: Eliasaid Munro, “Feminism: a Fourth Wave?” *Political Insight* 4, 2 (2013) 22–25 or Jennifer Baumgardner, “Is there a Fourth Wave? If so, does it matter,” In *F’EM! Goo Goo, Gaga, and Some Thoughts on Balls*. (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2011), 243–252.

**38** Rosi Braidotti, “Powers of Affirmation,” in *The Unexpected Guest: Art, Writing and Thinking on Hospitality*, ed. Sally Tallant and Paul Domela (London: Art Books Publishing, 2012), 281.

**39** Amelia Jones, “Art as a binary proposition; identity as a binary proposition,” in *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 17–62.

**40** Amelia Jones, “Queer Feminist Durationality: Time and Materiality as a Means of Resisting Spatial Objectification,” in *Seeing Differently A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 170–217.

**41** Amelia Jones (2012), 178.

**42** Amelia Jones (2012), 178

**43** Hemmings (2011), 32.

**44** Peggy Phelan, “Survey,” in *Art and Feminism*, ed. Helen Reckitt (London and New York: Phaidon, 2001), 18.

**45** Phelan (2001), 16.

**46** In writing about an associative logic, I was delighted to see that the forward slash whack is homophone to “WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution”, the title of the 2007 large-scale feminist exhibition that was curated by Cornelia Butler and first shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Widely acclaimed for its scope, the show was also heatedly debated by feminist art theorists, curators, and historians with regard to the paradoxes between institutions’ desires and the willingness to put on one feminist blockbuster show and institutions’ resistance to structural, economic, political, and organizational feminist transformation.

**47** Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 47.

**48** Mohanty (2003), p. 46.

**49** Mohanty (2003), p. 47.

**50** Mohanty (2003), p. 104.

**51** Amelia Jones, “Sexual Politics: Feminist Strategies, Feminist Conflicts, Feminist Histories,” in *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, ed. Amelia Jones (UCLA at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center in association with Berkeley, Los

Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996), 24.

**52** Dimitrakaki and Perry (2012): 10–11.

**53** Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry, “How to be Seen: An Introduction to Feminist Politics, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions,” in *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions*, ed. by Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 12.

**54** Dimitrakaki and Perry (2012): 5.

**55** Dimitrakaki and Perry (2012): 12.

**56** Dorothee Richter, “In Conversation with False Hearted Fanny: Feminist Demands on Curating,” in *Women’s: Museum. Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art*, ed. by Elke Krasny and Frauenmuseum Meran (Wien: Löcker, 2013), 92.

**57** Richter (2013): 93.

**58** Malin Hedlin Hayden and Jessic Sjöholm Skrubbe, “Preface”, in *Feminisms is Still Our Name: Seven Essays on Historiography and Curatorial Practices*, ed. Malin Hedlin Hayden and Jessica Sjöholm Skrubbe (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), xviii.

**59** Bracke and Puig de la Bellacasa (2004): 309.